

PRATHAM BOOKS
A Book in Every Child's Hand

Paplu, the Giant

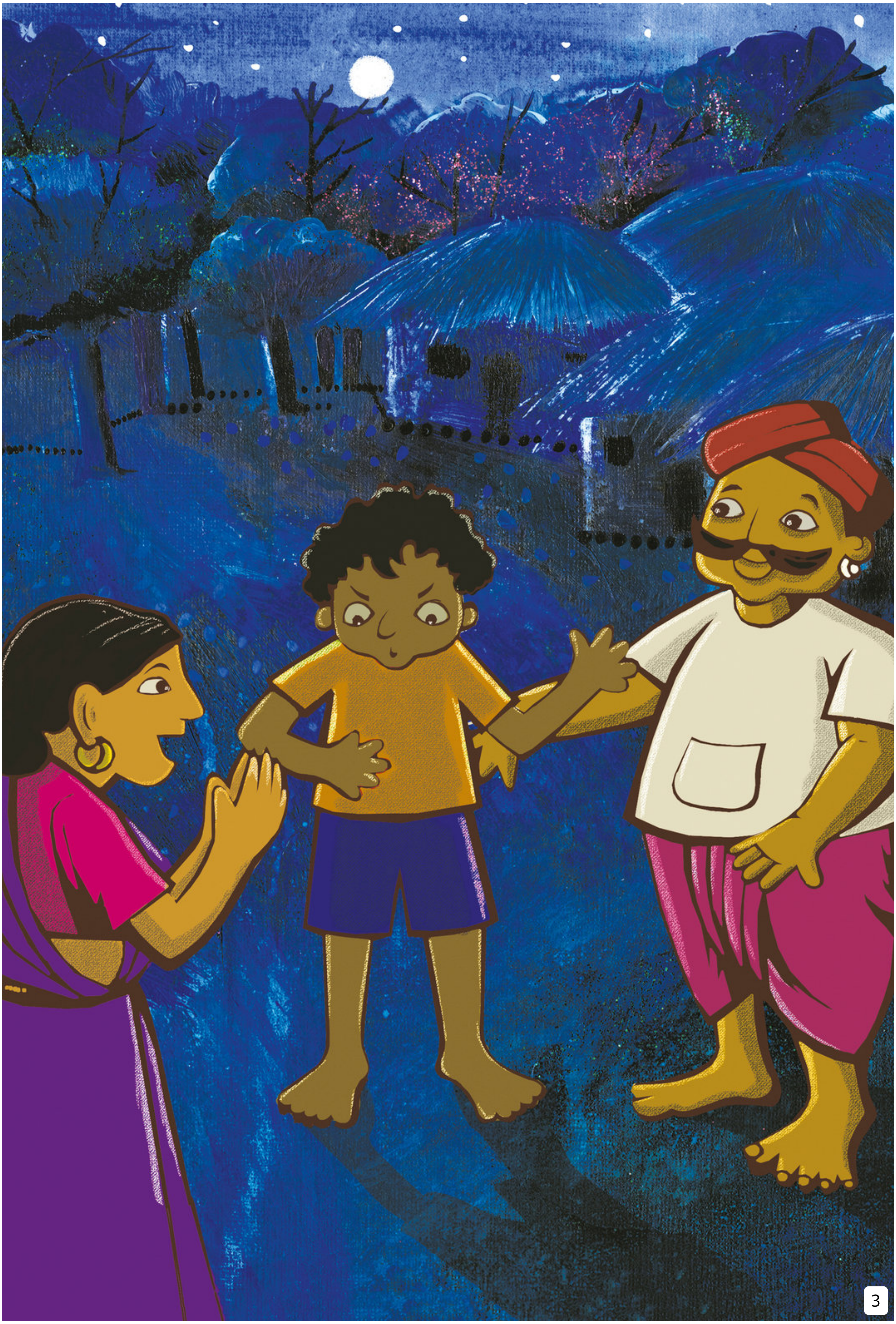
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Level 3

This is the story of a nine-year old giant called Paplu. He was very different from the other giants. They loved to fight, whereas Paplu hated fighting. While his classmates would spend their time twisting the ears of dinosaurs or yanking the tails of tigers, Paplu would be busy protecting his friends.

Paplu’s mother was worried about her son. One night she woke up Paplu. “Son, you will never be happy staying in our tribe. I am taking you to a village where people are normal human beings. You will stay there with Raghav, the head man.”

Just before they reached the village, Paplu’s mother asked him to close his eyes. When he opened them, he almost fainted. He had shrunk to one-tenth his size and so had she. Paplu’s mother handed him over to Raghav and left.



Paplu soon made friends with the boys and girls of the village.

One day Raghav came home very worried.
“A ruthless bandit called Angaar has blocked the only way out of our village. We cannot go to our farms to work and will surely starve,” he said. Paplu wished he could help Raghav in some way.

Paplu suddenly remembered something. Before leaving the forest, his mother had told him the magic words which would make him a giant once again. And as a giant, he would easily be able to take care of Angaar.

Paplu did everything he could, including standing on his head and pulling his own ears, but he couldn’t remember those words.



Then Paplu heard a soft lisp. “Paplu paiyaa, play with me, pleath.”

It was his two-year old neighbour Soni. Paplu was her best friend. He picked her up and threw her high in the air and she started singing:
“Paplu paiyya, Paplu paiyaa thlow me up, cath me quick, Paplu paiyya, Paplu paiyya please show me youll magic thlik.”

Paplu froze! These words and the tune sounded very familiar. He rushed inside and came out with a blue stone in his hand.

He now remembered what his mother had told him, “Son, throw the stone in the air and say these words: I’ll throw you up, I’ll catch you quick. Don’t forget my magic trick.”



As Paplu threw the stone and recited the words, he felt himself swelling up like a balloon.

Suddenly he heard a sound – R-r-rip! R-ri-ip!! His clothes were tearing. If he didn’t look for cover, he would soon be standing bang in the middle of the village, in clothes hundred sizes too small for him.

All he would have to cover his modesty would be strips of cloth and little else. Paplu rushed into the woods with the sound ‘R-r-rip! Rri-i-p!’ chasing him. Once deep into the undergrowth, Paplu got down on his knees.

It looked like he had missed a word or two in the magic chant his mother had made him learn. That is why his clothes had not grown along with his body!



What was he to do now? Although he had become a giant, he couldn’t venture out on his rescue mission in his birthday suit. He needed clothes urgently. But how was he to get clothes his size and that too, quickly?

He heard a voice and looked down. It was Raghav. “Soni told me you had become big and that you had run away somewhere. When I heard this strange story, I came out to investigate.”

“Using a magic trick my mother taught me, I have become a giant. Now I can take care of Angaar and his gang,” said Paplu.

“That’s great, then what are you waiting for?”
“My clothes didn’t keep pace with my growth. I am wearing almost nothing. How can I come out like this?” Raghav thought for some time and said, “Okay, give me some time. By nightfall, I’ll have your clothes ready.”



Raghav went back home and summoned all the tailors in the village. Twenty one tailors appeared in no time. Raghav explained the problem to them and said, “I want a pair of pyjamas and a kurta, to be stitched as soon as possible for Paplu.”

Soon ‘Operation Paplu Dress’ started. It was quite funny to see the tailors scrambling up Paplu’s back, legs and hands to take his measurements. The whole village got into action contributing whatever material they could. Even Soni donated her doll’s shawl to the project!

In seven hours, the dress was ready. In seven hours, with a whoop of joy, Paplu stood up towering over the villagers. He looked really smart with the multi-coloured kurta and an equally multi-coloured pyjama. There was thunderous applause.



It was just past midnight. Angaar and his men were fast asleep. Only two bandits were on guard. Suddenly Angaar woke up. He could hear a strange sound. He got up and picking up his sword, rushed out of his tent. The other dacoits too were coming out of their enclosures, spears and swords in hand.

“Whoosh!” There was the sound again. It seemed to be growing louder and closer. “WHOOSH!”

Angaar looked around. A dust storm seemed to be gathering momentum.

Trees had started swaying and the noise was slowly becoming deafening.
“WHOOSH! WHOOSH!” Angaar felt himself being picked up by the air current. He desperately tried to hold on, flaying his arms and legs, but it was no use. He was flying in the air.

To his left, was his deputy Jarnail looking like an ungainly dinosaur. To his right, was his most accomplished swordsman, Talwar, air-borne like his colleagues, desperately trying to reach out for his sword which was flying ahead of him. A few minutes later, there was a splash.



They landed in the river to the south of the village. As they swam to the shore, spluttering and shivering, a huge shadow loomed over their heads.

“Angaar, you scoundrel!” the shadow thundered, its voice echoing in the night.

“Y…yes,” stammered the dreaded Angaar. He had never been so terrified in his life, since the day his father, Rosh Bundela had walloped him for eating up his jalebis.

“This time I have merely roughed you up. Next time, if you or any of your men come anywhere close to the village, I’ll rip each and every limb from your bodies and chew them up.”

“Y..yes, Maharaj, we will never again come within a thousand miles of this place.”



“Good. Remember, if I hear you are even passing through these parts, I’ll make a paste of you and your gang and feed it to the fish in this river.”

“Yes, Maharaj. But please, do tell me, who are you? I have never seen you in these parts.”

“I am a guardian of this village,” Paplu said. He paused for a good ten seconds and then in his deepest tone said, “And my name is Paplu, the Giant.”

And with these words, Paplu stormed back to the village. Angaar and his men left the same night and were never heard of again.

Paplu went back to his original shape and size. However, he couldn’t get back his original name. No one called him Paplu anymore. To everyone, and even to Soni, he was Paplu, the Giant.



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Paplu, the Giant
(English)

Paplu was a strange giant who did not like to fight with anyone, nor did he like scaring people. But when his beloved villagers were in danger, he rose to great heights to solve the problem.

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.